

## The Life, Death and Burial of Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr.

Within the broad churchyard of Historic Christ Church, enclosed by its brick wall measuring about 200 feet on all sides, lies a group of graves once enclosed by a smaller brick wall of their own. That wall is now gone, but the Kelley grave plot remains bordered by its original capstone, now set on the ground and enhanced with an ivy hedge. The iron gate which once led into the enclosure now resides in the nearby museum.

Within this space rest six large, white marble slabs, weathered but unmoved from the time they were installed in the 1850s. The entire plot was the work of James Kelley, Jr., then nearly 70 years old and the last surviving child of the ten born to his parents, James, Sr. and Judith. Because James Jr. intended to create a memorial in stone to all twelve in his family, he included descriptions of the six children *not* buried in the plot in the lengthy text inscribed upon the grave slab of their father.

One other grave marker lies within the Kelley grave plot, that of Dr. Charles Taylor. His modest upright headstone and footstone, carved from gray limestone, stand in contrast with the horizontal marble slabs that James Jr. ordered from Baltimore as monuments for his family. Why is it there? With no known family connection between Dr. Charles Taylor and the Kelleys, and because he died twenty-five years before the Kelley family plot was formed, a basic explanation is that Taylor's grave already shared the small space of the churchyard that James Jr. decided to enclose and enhance. On this view Taylor's grave is now within the Kelley plot because it was there before its creation, as were the graves and original markers of James Jr.'s parents and two of their sons. James Jr. certainly had no right to exhume Taylor's grave in order to realize his vision, and he may have had no wish to do so. Though it may not be all, this conjecture is enough to explain why Dr. Taylor rests in the Kelley family plot.

What do we know of Dr. Charles Taylor? For many years, researchers of the parish history believed him to be Dr. Charles Taylor of Orange County, a veteran of the Revolutionary War and cousin of James Madison. This conclusion was in keeping with the phrase on his marker, "Born in the County of Orange died in the County of Lancaster." It was also, however, distinctly at odds with ample documentary evidence that Dr. Charles Taylor died in 1821, whereas "1825" is incised on the marker. A gravestone mason could certainly make a mistake, but to carve and deliver a marker stating a date of death four years *in the future* is not credible. It is more plausible that the Dr. Charles Taylor buried at Christ Church was another physician of the very same name and time, surprising as that seems.

And now we have learned just that. The Dr. Charles Taylor buried in the Kelley grave plot was the *son* of Dr. Charles Taylor of Orange County. We are indebted to one of his many uncles for this knowledge. Charles Jr.'s father, Dr. Charles Taylor, Sr. (1755-1821), was the ninth of twelve sons of Col. George Taylor (1711-1792). All but two of them served in the Revolutionary War, with Charles serving as a Surgeon in a regiment of the Virginia Convention Guards commanded by his older brother Francis Taylor (1747-1799). Following the war Francis, who never married, came to live with his father on the family estate in Orange Courthouse. From 1786 till his death in 1799 he kept a daily diary, which has survived intact with the exception of that for the year 1793.

The diary of Col. Francis Taylor, originally composed in thirteen separate volumes and transcribed by a descendant in 1902, is full of references to his brother Dr. Charles Taylor, Sr. There are relatively few pages (from over 400) in which the doctor is not mentioned for having visited, dined with, or treated some member of his extended family or a neighbor. Indeed, he often socialized or provided medical care to the family of James Madison, with whom the Taylors were related in a host of ways. Charles

Taylor, Sr. and his brothers were all cousins of the future President. It is also from these pages that we learn of the birth of Charles Taylor, Jr., in the diary entry for 18 June 1790:

*Cloudy and very warm morning, Had Irish potatoes planted in Sweet potatoe patch. Capt. Burnley was here and dined. Heard that Mr. Shepherd had a son born yesterday.— C Taylor had a son born to-day.<sup>1</sup>*

**Note:** All quoted texts are transcribed verbatim.

A few months later, in the entry for 9 November 1790, Francis provides additional detail:

*Heard that Mess'rs Jefferson & Madison passed by on their way to Philadelphia. We went to C. Taylor's, whose son was Christened, Charles — Uncle Taylor & family — Mr. Belmain & wife & my father were there & Capt Burnley & family.<sup>2</sup>*

At the end of each annual volume of his diary, Francis wrote a summary of the births, marriages and deaths he had recorded in the daily pages for that year. Here he provides a final confirmation, “June 18 Charles Taylor had a son born. Named Charles 9<sup>th</sup> Nov.”<sup>3</sup>

Though Francis's diary continues for another nine years, he does not again mention his young nephew. But in his last will and testament, written in 1797 and probated in the Orange County court in 1799, he left lands in Kentucky and Ohio to his brothers and six of his nephews, including nine-year-old Charles. Many of these parcels had been awarded to Col. Francis Taylor as part of his pension for his service in the Revolutionary War. Some years later (1810) this bequeathed land from his uncle became especially important to young Charles. A document signed by both him and his father gave power of attorney to a James Taylor:

*Whereas the late Colo. Francis Taylor devised by his will one thousand acres of land lying in the state of Ohio in the Military district and being survey No, 1659 lying on the waters of Ohio to his Nephew Charles Taylor, and whereas it is thought advisable by the sd. Charles Taylor & his father Charles Taylor Sen'r that about one half of the said tract should be sold to enable the said Charles to complete his studies, he not yet having arrived at lawful age*

*Now know all men by these presents that we the said Charles Taylor Sen'r and Charles Taylor Jr. do nominate constitute & empower our friend James Taylor of Campbell County Kentucky our true and lawful attorney for us to sell & dispose of one half of the said survey for the best price he can get . . .<sup>4</sup>*

The description of James Taylor as “friend” was a form of polite expression used for friends and family alike. James Taylor was another of Charles Jr.'s uncles, who had moved from Virginia to Newport, Kentucky in the 1790s. As a major figure there and the founder of the town itself, James Taylor was engaged in many land transactions. By May of 1811, he had sold 250 acres from Charles, Jr.'s tract and had some cash on its way to him. But in November Charles wrote him a letter that would be the first of many like it to follow:

Philadelphia Novr. 17<sup>th</sup>, 1811 Filbert Street No. 89

Dear Sir,

*Since I wrote you last I have received of Mr. Belmain \$48.70 also the amount of the order on Robert Brent of Washington City making in the whole \$248.70 which I have placed to your credit. After bying my tickets, without which I would not be permitted to attend the university, and other articles which I could not do without I must now request you to send me on by the first of January the balance of the money which you have in your hands, by doing of which you will oblige me very, very much, if convenient for you to do so – for by that time I shall be without a cent in my pocket.*

*Your friend and humble servant –  
Charles Taylor<sup>5</sup>*

With this note we learn that Charles, Jr. had decided to become a doctor, like his father. To do so he had enrolled in the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, the first medical school in the United States. His first year of lectures was about to begin. A year later we find him still in Philadelphia, living on a different street, but still waiting for the lectures to begin and still in great need of money: “The commencement of the lectures takes place to morrow, and not one solitary cent have I for the purchasing of tickets, wood, nor anything else. I wrote you on the first of Sept. and also on first of Oct. and have received not answer to either of the letters.”<sup>6</sup>

Not only his education but his warmth during the winter were now in the hands of his good uncle, who was very busy with his duties in the War. Still, he came to the aid of his nephew. Charles Jr.’s next plea for money came in January, and it was an advance notice: “I am compelled once more to trouble you and must beg that you will send me the balance that is due on the sale of my land as soon as you possibly can after the receipt of this, as by the first of March I will be entirely without a cent – and shall be compelled to borrow to pay my landlady, as she leaves the city the last of February – I must beg and pray that you will not disappoint me.”<sup>7</sup>

The General did not disappoint on the needed money – and he soon came to the assistance of his nephew in another way. Dozens of letters written during the war by Gen. James Taylor to President James Madison (his cousin) survive. Most of these were concerned with military matters, but Charles Taylor, Jr., now a young man of age twenty-two, was the subject of one of them:

Washington March 30th 1813

*Sir*

*I have the honor to enclose to you a letter I have just received from Doct Charles Taylor Jr. I presume it is unnecessary for me to say any thing of this gentlemans claim to your attention, as I presume you know him personally.*

*As to my self I know but little of him personally; I had the pleasure of Spending a day with him when I was in Virginia three years ago. And I have had a number of letters from him since that time having superintended the Sale of a tract of land in Ohio left to him by his uncle, the late Colo. F. Taylor, and I assure you sir I think him a fine young man. This is the second season he has spent in Philadelphia attending the lectures. I am surprisid as he anxious to enter the Army & has been for some time that he has not applied thro’ his amiable father or other friends in Orange, who would be better able than my self to speak of his qualifications as a professional man.*

*I was addressed by letter a few days before I left Kentucky by Francis Taylor (son of Jonothan decd.) who is a very clever fellow to interest my self in an appointment for the Son of our worthy friend Major William Taylor. My Knowledge of his son John is some what limited. I have not seen him since May 1811. He then appeared to be a good looking young man of about nineteen or twenty years of age. I think he bid for to be*

*over the middle size and appeared to be active & healthy and I have no doubt but with experience would make a valuable officer.*

*Both of these young men are from the old stock of patriots who are rema[r]kable for sobriety honesty & perseverance & courage.*

*I am induced to think there are some vacancies in 17<sup>th</sup> the Regiments now raising in Kentucky.*

*The situation of his fathers Circumstances by misfortunes, & not by any imprudence of his own would make the appointment of Mr John Taylor particularly gratifying to all his friends, and I have no doubt but both these Gent should they be appointed would do honor to themselves & their Country. I have the honor to be with the highest esteem sir Your Most obed servt.*

*James Taylor<sup>8</sup>*

Regrettably the referenced letter from Charles, Jr. has not been found, but it did achieve its intent. Madison nominated and the Senate approved both John and Charles Taylor for commissions in the U.S. Army, John to an infantry regiment and Charles to Surgeon's Mate in the Peace Establishment. Another cousin and the future President, Zachary Taylor, was already serving in the Army in the western theater of the War. Charles soon sent another note to his uncle General James Taylor:

*Philadelphia 21 April 1813*

*N. 3 George Street*

*Dear Sir,*

*I have been daily expecting a letter from you with money. I have been confined for ten days with sickness – but am mending tho sloly. I have accepted the appointment which you were so good as to procure me. I am very weak at this time.*

*Dr. Rush departed this life on Monday afternoon. Yours most respectfully*

*Charles Taylor<sup>9</sup>*

Charles had been a student for two years at the University of Pennsylvania medical school when he received the commission. And it is probable that he attended some lectures by the well-known Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Rush had held the professorship of "the Practice of Physic" there since 1796.

In *The Army Register of the United States, 1813*<sup>10</sup> Charles Taylor is listed as member of the General Staff of the Army in the rank of Garrison Surgeon's Mate beginning on 3 April 1813. A handwritten entry in the *Register of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798 -1914* outlines the course of his service from then on:

Present at Mil. Hospital. New prison, Phila. Nov. 10/13. Order Jan. 9/14 present in charge of the sick conveyed from City Jail hospital. Phila to Province Isld. Hospital. Order Feb. 26/14. On furlough to Orange Court House, Va. To Mch. 10/14 – June 27/14. Ordered to S. Harbor – present Nov. 30/14. G.O.A. & I.G.O. June 10/15. Retained as Gar. Surgs. Mate for the Peace Establishment.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. spent roughly two years as a commissioned officer, serving the first of those in hospitals in Philadelphia and the second at Sacket's Harbor on Lake Ontario. He would have faced the greatest number of men suffering from injury and disease in the latter place, on the U.S.-Canadian border. It was the major theater in the War, where the greatest number of battles and attacks occurred. In accord with his new role, his commission was changed from Garrison Surgeon's Mate to Hospital Surgeon's Mate on 14 June 1814. Nine days later he wrote to General Taylor from

Philadelphia with another plea for money, ending: "I leave this to morrow for Sackets harbor and have scarce sufficiency to take me there, as you may easily conceive." He signed himself "Charles Taylor, H.S. Mate."<sup>12</sup>

Six months later on Christmas Eve the war was ended by a treaty reached in Ghent, Belgium; but it took another two months for a signed copy of it to reach the United States, for signing by Madison. In a letter to his uncle written from Brownsville, near Sackets Harbor, on 25 Feb 1815, Charles Taylor addressed the changes that might be in store for him:

*Dear Sir,*

*Almost twelve months has elapsed since I have heard from you. I have written repeatedly – I feel particularly anxious to hear from you at this time, as peace is about to take place, I shall be very much obliged to you if you will be so good as to inform me what I have due. Some of the hospital mates will be dismissed the service, and it is as likely to be me as any one. In that event. I shall be very much in want of it, but if I should be so fortunate as to remain in service my pay will support me. A flag went from Sacketts Harbor yesterday with the treaty. Yours respectfully,*

*Charles Taylor  
H.S.M.*

*Dr. Blood desires his compliments to you<sup>13</sup>*

The "flag" would have been a British ship carrying back to England the copy of the Treaty of Ghent, which only days before had arrived from there (at Annapolis). On February 16<sup>th</sup> President Madison had added his signature to that of the King, and the Senate ratified the treaty on the same day. Thus Charles learned, probably before his uncle, that the conflict had officially ended and his life was about to change. In the above note, he favored remaining in the service. When he next wrote on April 20<sup>th</sup> to thank his uncle for money, which had arrived that day, he was more neutral on the matter, "Gen'l Brown left this town days since on a visit to Washington for the purpose of assisting in the selection of officers for the peace establishment . . . I will write you again, as soon as I hear whether I am to remain or go out. If you know of any good place for a man of my profession, I will thank you to let me know."<sup>14</sup>

Taylor's original appointment to the Peace Establishment meant that his position was among those meant to be filled even when the country was not at war – a member of the standing army, in accord with a statute passed by Congress in 1802 under Jefferson. And the last entry in the *Register of Enlistments* (above), suggests that on 10 June 1815, he remained in the service into peace time. But he did not. A note written to General Daniel Parker, the General under whom he served, reveals that the offer was made but he firmly declined:

Brownsville June 29<sup>th</sup> 1815

Sir:

It appears from a General Order lately issued from the Adj. Gen'l Office that I have been provisionally retained as Garrison Surgeons Mate. The appointment I cannot think of accepting.

Yours Respectfully  
Charles Taylor  
H.S. Mate

D. Parker  
Adj. Genl.<sup>15</sup>

Whatever his reasons, young Dr. Charles Taylor was now settled on returning to civilian life. He was honorably discharged on 15 June 1815, having turned 25 years old just days before – and he promptly wrote to General James Taylor:

Brownsville June 22 1815  
N.Y.

Dear Sir,

*You no doubt have seen before this that I am numbered among the disbanded officers. I have to beg & solicit of you that as soon after the receipt of this as possible you will forward me the balance of money remaining in your hands, as it is my intention to settle myself in business without the least possible delay of time. You will please to direct your letter to Orange Courthouse Virginia. I shall leave this for the south as soon as we can possibly be paid off. If you can inform me of any place where there would be a possibility of a young man's doing any thing, I shall consider it as a particular favor.*

*Yours respectfully, etc., etc.  
Charles Taylor<sup>16</sup>*

In a matter of weeks Charles was back at his family's home in Orange Courthouse. His father, Dr. Charles Taylor, Sr. had turned 60 at the start of 1815. Might the two physicians have discussed the idea that Charles the son join or carry on the practice his father had established? If so, they did not settle on it. Charles wrote to his uncle about his plans and needs:

Orange Ct. House Virginia  
August 31 1815

Dear Sir,

*I wrote to you some time previous to my leaving Brownsville requesting you to send me the balance due me on the sale of my land. Time now Sir is precious to me. Its my determination to settle myself in the practice of medicine so soon as I can hear from you. Until then I can do nothing. I hope Sir you will take into consideration my peculiar situation at this time & exert every nerve to oblige your friend and relation – Which will ever be remembered by your*

*ever ob't & H'bl [Obedient & Humble]  
Charles Taylor Jun'r<sup>17</sup>*

We do not know exactly how soon after this Charles began his “practice of medicine.” But we know he had done so by December, and from his correspondence, we also know where:

Lanct. Ct. House  
14 December 1815

Dear Sir,

*It is extremely disagreeable to me to be compeled to make use of any harsh expression may be unpleasant or irritating to the feelings of one whom I have heretofore considered my friend & who has acted as such toward me. I not only viewed him with respect by looked on him as a father, for the many favours which he has rendered me. The obligation I am alwas ready to acknowledge. But when I reflect for a moment on the silent and contemptable manner in which you have treated all my letters & solicitations, stating to you my situation, my necessities & wants – what am I to infer from your silence. When you informed me last Spring previous to leaving Sackets Harbour that you had part of the money then in your hands, why then has it been withheld me when I have so repeatedly written to you & stated my situation, my wants, my necessities – but all to no purpose. Living in a strange part of the country & among strangers, and not a farthing but what I am indebted to them for the loan of – and all this in consequence of your not letting me*

*have that which I am entitled to & which is my just due. You will oblige me with what you have in your hands —*

*Yours, etc.  
Charles Taylor<sup>18</sup>*

The town of Lancaster Courthouse, Virginia was a little over a hundred miles to the east of Dr. Charles Taylor's family home in Orange Courthouse. His reasons for choosing to begin his work as a physician there remain unknown, but he would not have been entirely a "stranger" there. Lancaster County was the ancestral home of the Conway family, who were related through marriage to the Taylors and the Madisons in many ways. If one were to venture why young Charles settled in Lancaster, a good guess would be that a Conway descendant told him a doctor was needed there.

Whether General James Taylor deserved the criticism he received, or was the blameless victim of such things as misdirected or delayed letters, can only be inferred from indirect evidence. The evidence points in the direction of his innocence. Much later, in March 1817, in his final surviving letter to his uncle, Charles felt accused of wrongdoing because the General had asked him to send him an account of all funds he had received. Charles replied that he had not kept a complete account, but if he failed to acknowledge each payment at the time of its receipt, it was certainly "not from any impure motive in my part to defraud you of one cent."<sup>19</sup> Apparently the uncle had asked his nephew for an account simply to reconcile it with the one he had kept. The General's account shows that in December of 1815 he sent Charles a final payment of \$200 on the total of \$2,983 he had collected for the sale of parcels of his nephew's land over the course of three years. Thus the General's payment and the nephew's infuriated demand for it occurred in the same month. Their letters may have crossed each other in the mail. Amity was likely soon restored, if it had ever been lost, between the two gentlemen.

With no further personal documents found, all that we know of the life of Dr. Charles Taylor Jr. in Lancaster is derived from a few references to him in the public records. While these court matters were surely not central to the young doctor's daily life, they nonetheless were a part of it.

The first reference is found in a deed of trust made by Moses Lunsford on 15 Jan 1821. Charles Taylor and three other men stood as sureties for Lunsford for his purchase of a tract of a land auctioned by order of the court in late 1820 for \$1505, to be paid by him in the course of one year. In other words, Taylor and the others made themselves legally obligated to pay Lunsford's loan, if he did not. Apparently they knew and trusted him.

In what was a customary response, Lunsford then undertook to legally protect (indemnify) the gentlemen who had put their own fortunes on the line for him. He deeded "the said tract of land & three negros"<sup>20</sup> to be held in trust by a third party, Spencer George. The terms of this deed specified that should Lunsford default on his payment, Spencer George could sell the land and slaves to pay the debt. In this way Lunsford undertook to provide security for the men who had secured him.

The Lancaster County court records from 1820 to 1822 show Moses Lunsford to be the losing defendant in many lawsuits brought against him for unpaid debts. Taylor and the other sureties saw this happening and in November of 1821 filed a bill of complaint against him in the Lancaster County Court, sitting in Chancery, "Your Orators from the late conduct of the said Moses Lunsford have reason to believe that they are in great danger that the said negros [Cesar, Frederick, and Porteus] will be conveyed away or so secreted that your Orators will lose their security for indemnity against their securityship."<sup>21</sup> If the slaves were unavailable to Spencer George should Lunsford fail to repay his loan,

then Taylor and the other sureties would be unprotected by their value. They appealed to the court to prevent this, requesting various decrees or actions from the justices.

In his reply to the complaint, Lunsford testified he “never intended or attempted, or caused to be attempted the secreting or conveying away of the negroes in the Bill to the injury of the Complainants,” and that he never would. In his words, their fears were “groundless.” The opposite proved to be true.

In February of 1822 Lunsford was imprisoned for one of his many debts. From the jail he sold a piece of land to the Sheriff of Lancaster County in order to pay this debt and regain his freedom. In April Taylor and the other sureties then became liable for Lunsford’s debt on the Edwards’ land, when the Edwards’ heirs won their suit against him. Spencer George put the land up for sale as required by the trust. Charles Taylor, Jr. and George Webb, one of the other securities, purchased it. The \$733 they paid approximated their share of the \$1505 owed to the Edwards’ heirs, which Lunsford’s four sureties became liable for when he defaulted. In this way the Edwards’ heirs received what was due from them, and Taylor and Webb acquired the land in exchange. There is an indication that Taylor also purchased Frederick, one of the three slaves held in the trust.

In the midst of all this Dr. Charles Taylor, Sr. died at his home in Orange Courthouse (27 Jan 1821). Charles, Jr. was the eighth of ten children born to him and his wife Sarah (Conway) Taylor, a granddaughter of Edwin Conway of Christ Church parish. Another of Edwin Conway’s descendants, Catlett Conway, Jr. (1786-1839) was married to Charles Taylor, Jr.’s sister Harriet. In his will Charles the father made Conway one of the executors of his estate along with one other son-in-law, Thomas Jenkins, and two of his sons, Charles, Jr. and Robert.

The Executors were responsible for paying the debts of Dr. Charles Taylor, Sr. This led Catlett Conway to stand as a security for Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr., who was liable for “his proportion of any debts or costs which might thereafter be established against the estate of the said Charles the father.”<sup>22</sup> Charles, Jr. in turn indemnified Conway, his friend and relative, by deeding to Ralph Edmonds “a parcel of land lying and being in the County of Lancaster and containing about one hundred acres more or less together with three negroes, Reuben, Frederick, and Armistead in trust to sell if necessary.”<sup>23</sup> Reuben was a slave whom Charles, Jr. received from his father through his will. Frederick, as mentioned earlier, may have come to him through the sale of the property of Moses Lunsford, though this idea is based solely on the name. The land he placed in trust was quite surely the former Lunsford tract that had become his at the end of 1822.

This deed of trust was made by Charles Jr. on 24 July 1824, indicating that the estate of the father was yet to be fully settled three years after his death. It also appears to show that Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. may have been uncertain of his capacity to pay his proportion of the possible debts of his father. In other court cases from this time he appears as a defendant, because he stood as a surety for other men who defaulted on their loans. This liability for the debts of others could explain and justify his decision to place his land in trust with Ralph Edmonds in order to protect Catlett Conway.

In the end, Ralph Edmonds did convey the land of Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. to Catlett Conway, but not to pay the debts of his deceased father. Rather, as stated in a deed of release (27 October 1827):

... whereas the Said Charles Taylor since the execution of the of the Said Indenture hath departed this life the said Catlett Conway in consideration of having the aforesaid bond of indemnity delivered up to him is willing and desirous that the said Ralph Edmonds should release all his interest in and to the Said



land and Slaves to the heirs & distributees of the Said Charles Taylor in order to a division thereof among them. <sup>24</sup>

Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. died sometime in the opening months of 1825. No record gives an exact date of death, but the records do suggest a reason for this uncertainty – that Taylor died alone. A coroner was paid some fees following his death, indicating there was a need to determine the cause. But the coroner did not summon a jury to join him in making this judgment, as was required if the deceased appeared to have met a sudden, violent, unnatural or suspicious death. This points to Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. having died alone but from natural causes – by “the hand of God.” In that case the *discovery* of his death would be firmly dated but the event itself might not.

The young physician died without a will. Accordingly, on 25 April 1825 the court appointed Ralph Edmonds to be the Administrator of the estate of Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. In his other capacity as trustee for the land Taylor had placed in trust with him, Edmonds released it in October of 1827 to Catlett Conway for division amongst the doctor’s lawful heirs. Shortly after (February, 1828) the court ordered a series of actions to be taken for the distribution of the estate:

- the land, because it appeared “to the court that it was not worth the sum of \$300 to each of the said decedents legal heirs” was to be sold by Edmonds at public auction in Lancaster
- the slaves Taylor owned in Lancaster were also to be sold by Edmonds at auction
- the slaves Taylor owned “in the county of Orange” were to be sold there by three commissioners appointed by the court
- John Hall, William Kelley, Peter Snyder and James Kelley, “or any one of them having first taken the oath presented by law are appointed to Examine state and settle with Ralph Edmonds admr. of Charles Taylor dec’d the account of his admin of the Estate of the decedent”<sup>25</sup>

In April, the court accepted the report of the commissioners appointed to sell the slaves in Orange County. Following the required month of advertisement, five enslaved persons – two women and three men, one of whom was Reuben – had been sold to different buyers “before the tavern door of Blokey & Woodfolk at Orange Court House.”<sup>26</sup> Taylor appears to have owned two other slaves in Lancaster, Armistead and Frederick. Only the sale of Armistead (for \$375) appears in the accounting done by Edmonds. There is also a record of \$6.18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> having been “given to Rheubin [Reuben] to go up the country,” i.e., to Orange County, where he was later sold.<sup>27</sup> The ultimate fate of Frederick is unknown. The land was sold for \$200.

Ralph Edmond’s final account for the estate of the young doctor was filed with the court in November of 1833.<sup>28</sup> Its two pages of detail show Taylor to have been indebted to many, and many indebted to him, at the time of his death. His debts amounted to \$1431 with more than a third of them due to William or James Kelley. Dozens of other individuals are named as receiving payments from the estate but there is no description of why the money was due. The many debtors to the doctor, presumably for his medical services, are provided with even more anonymity. They are simply grouped together under the heading: “Cash rec’d for bonds & accounts due Doct: Taylor at the time of his death.” The total due to him exceeded the amount he owed to others. In the final tally, Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. died with \$170.35 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to his name.

By their nature, the above matters of public record from the last decade of his short life provide only a limited view of Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. They reveal that he was unmarried and had built trusting relationships in what began as a “strange part of the country” for him. But where was his home? Did he

keep an office in Kilmarnock or Lancaster Courthouse? Who were his patients, his friends, his visitors? We are without answers to such central questions. His grave marker is adorned with the symbols of a Freemason, making it likely he was a member of the Wicomico Lodge located in Lancaster Courthouse. But there appear to be no records of the group, which could shed light on what role this fellowship may have played in his life.

One glimpse into how the young doctor spent his days at this time is provided in the biographical sketch of another man, appearing in a volume of the lives of the early Baptist ministers of Virginia. Evidently the young doctor not only practiced his profession, he taught it:

*William Heath Kirk was born in Lancaster County Virginia, at "Mars Hill," near Kilmarnock, on August 18, 1804 . . . Upon the death of his father he took up the study of medicine and, after several years under Dr. Charles Taylor at Kilmarnock, and Dr. Joseph Basye at Heathsville, and at the end of two sessions at the Maryland University, he took his diploma." [Virginia Baptist Ministers, George Braxton Taylor, 1912]<sup>29</sup>*

We know that all of the Kelley brothers still living in the area – James, William, Charles and John – served in the Virginia militia during the War of 1812. Might their experiences in this conflict have become the basis of a special friendship with Charles Taylor, Jr? The settlement of his estate after his death reveals he had financial dealings with all of them. But did they also appreciate him for medical care he provided to them, their family, or their slaves? Did he hold them in high regard for kindnesses to him? As owners of a general store in Kilmarnock, James and William Kelley would likely have been among the most generous “strangers” to extend credit to him when he first arrived in Lancaster with “not a farthing but what I am indebted to them for the loan of.”

This account began with the question of why the grave marker of Dr. Charles Taylor, Jr. is found in the company of the Kelley family in their grave plot. The proposed answer was that he had been buried in the same part of the churchyard at the time of his death in 1825, long before the plot was conceived. But why was it placed near the Kelley graves then? Perhaps we have an answer to this question, too. The total of over \$500 in debts Charles, Jr. owed at the time of his death to William and James Kelley is made up of many individual amounts, representing unpaid bills from his past or unknown expenses following his death incurred by the Kelley brothers. They signify that he had an ongoing business relationship with them – and they may mark a longstanding friendship among the three gentlemen. Might any of the unspecified payments from Charles’ estate to William and James Kelley be a reimbursement for expenses they assumed in overseeing the burial of their friend – including ordering his marker and choosing a place for his burial in the Christ Church churchyard?

It is certainly possible. Following his death, William and James Kelley were named by the court to audit the settlement of his estate, which is another indication that they knew him well. In conclusion, when Charles Taylor, Jr. died, as a single man in Lancaster county without relatives nearby, James and William Kelley may have seen to it that he was respectfully buried near their own relatives for this simple reason – he had become like family to them. It is a kind and not unreasonable thought.

Patrick J. Heffernan  
October, 2019

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Francis Taylor Diary, 1786-1799, #1907-z, p151.  
Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- <sup>2</sup> Francis Taylor Diary, 1786-1799, #1907-z, p159.  
Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- <sup>3</sup> Francis Taylor Diary, 1786-1799, #1907-z, p161.  
Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- <sup>4</sup> Power of Attorney, Charles Taylor, Sr. and Charles Taylor, Jr. to James Taylor, 17 Aug 1810.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>5</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 17 Nov 1811.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>6</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 18 Nov 1812.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>7</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 1 Jan 1813.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>8</sup> "To James Madison from James Taylor, 30 March 1813," *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/03-06-02-0160>. [Original source: *The Papers of James Madison*, Presidential Series, vol. 6, 8 February–24 October 1813, ed. Angela Kreider, J. C. A. Stagg, Jeanne Kerr Cross, Anne Mandeville Colony, Mary Parke Johnson, and Wendy Ellen Perry. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008, pp. 167–168.]
- <sup>9</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 21 Apr 1813.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>10</sup> The Army Register of the United States, 1813. Archive.org, Open Library.  
<https://archive.org/details/officialarmyregi1813unit/p8,14>.
- <sup>11</sup> Fold3, Army Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914 (/title/891/army-register-of-enlistments-1798-1914 : accessed October 26, 2019), database and images, <https://www.fold3.com/title/891/army-register-of-enlistments-1798-1914>  
Source: Register of Enlistments, Vol. 64, p. 271, *Register of Enlistments of the U.S. Army, 1798 - 1914* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M233, roll 32), RG 94, NAB.
- <sup>12</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 23 Jun 1814.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>13</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 25 Feb 1815.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>14</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 20 Apr 1815.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- <sup>15</sup> Fold3, Letters Received by the Adjutant General, 1805-1821 (/title/775/letters-received-by-the-adjutant-general-1805-1821 : accessed October 26, 2019), database and images  
<https://www.fold3.com/title/775/letters-received-by-the-adjutant-general-1805-1821>

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Source: Letters Received by the Adjutant General, 1805-1821 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M566), RG 94.

<sup>16</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 22 Jun 1815.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>17</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 31 Aug 1815.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>18</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 14 Dec 1815.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>19</sup> Letter, Charles Taylor, Jr. to Gen. James Taylor, 14 Mar 1817.  
War of 1812 mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>20</sup> Lancaster County Deed Book, ???, 15 Jan 1821, Deed of Trust from Moses Lunsford and his wife Margaret to Spencer George, p393-395.

<sup>21</sup> Lancaster County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1722-1936. Webb & Others vs. Moses Lunsford, 1822-04. Local Government Records Collection, Lancaster Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. [https://www.lva.virginia.gov/chancery/case\\_detail.asp?CFN=103-1822-004](https://www.lva.virginia.gov/chancery/case_detail.asp?CFN=103-1822-004)

<sup>22</sup> Lancaster County Deed Book 33, 1824-1830, p22.

<sup>23</sup> Lancaster County Deed Book 33, 1824-1830, p22.

<sup>24</sup> Lancaster County Deed Book 33, 1824-1830, p205.

<sup>25</sup> Lancaster County Order Book 27-A, p5. These court instructions appear in two different orders.

<sup>26</sup> Lancaster County Estate Book, 1824-1830, p439.

<sup>27</sup> Lancaster County Estate Book, 1830-1835, p396-398.

<sup>28</sup> Lancaster County Estate Book, 1830-1835, p396-398.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, George Braxton. *Virginia Baptist Ministers*. J.P. Bell Co., 1913, p370.